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Mr. Vaughan completely in praising Dryden for his open-mindedness should have secured more of his present interpreter's appreciation.

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*The United States of America*, Cambridge Historical Series. By EDWARD CHANNING, PH.D., Assistant Professor of History in Harvard University. Macmillan & Co., 66 Fifth avenue. Price \$1.50.

PROFESSOR CHANNING says in his prefatory note, "The aim of this little book is to trace the steps by which the American people and its peculiar type of federal state have developed out of such heterogeneous and unpromising materials for nation building as were to be found in the English-American colonies in 1760. Less attention has been given to campaigns and battles than is usual in works of this class, and the space thus gained has been devoted to the elucidation of the deeper causes underlying the American Revolution, and to a detailed account of the period between the close of the Revolutionary War and the inauguration of President Madison."

Comparatively few of our American historians have set before themselves so serious a purpose as this, while by far the larger number have been content to be little more than mere chroniclers of the events which have made up the outward life of the nation.

It is probably true that the American people are more deeply interested today than ever before in the great movements which have molded our government and determined the constitution of our society, and a work which will seriously and thoughtfully discuss them within a compass sufficiently limited to make it accessible to the general reader will be welcomed.

While the scope of Dr. Channing's work is confined to the limits of a manual it is evident that he has not been contented with a partial investigation of the facts, but that he has drawn from all available sources materials for a thorough if not exhaustive discussion of each subject. The growth and development of the policies which have made up our national life have never been treated more candidly, clearly or concisely. It is hard for an American citizen to write an impartial history of his own country. Our national life is comparatively of so recent origin that we have not yet escaped entirely from the pas-

sions which were engendered by our violent separation from the mother country. Even our most reliable and sober historians are liable to be biased by their patriotism in places where the national honor is supposed to be called in question; yet, however gratifying this may be to our pride, it can hardly be called the true historical spirit. It is, therefore, positively refreshing to find an author who is not afraid to rise above partisanship and pronounce impartial judgments even though he must violate long-cherished traditions by so doing. Professor Channing's careful and impartial treatment of mooted questions is seen throughout the book, but nowhere more conspicuously than in his discussion of the causes of the Revolutionary War. His spirit may be illustrated by a passage on page 33, where he says:

"In conclusion it should be stated that a careful examination of the whole subject does not bear out the assertion, which has often been made, that Parliament was actuated by a selfish desire to promote the interests of subjects of the crown living in Britain at the cost of other subjects living outside of the realm. . . . It would be an interesting inquiry whether the present colonial system of Great Britain, in which many of the colonies hedge themselves about with protective tariffs, is really productive of greater proportional benefit to the people of the whole empire than was the colonial system of a century and a quarter ago."

A noteworthy feature of the work is the use to which biography has been put to shed light upon the difficult questions which have been involved in the growth and expansion of the nation. America's history may be epitomized in the lives of a few score of her greatest citizens. This fact Dr. Channing recognizes, and he does not fail to bring out with distinctness and power the part that these men have played in shaping national policies and in building up the welfare of the people. These characterizations are necessarily short and are wholly incidental to the main discussion. Yet it has taken much time and labor to collect the materials from which they are drawn, and the author has bestowed upon them the same conscientious care which characterizes all his work.

As a whole the book is able and scholarly and will be of interest to the general reader as well as to the student, and is a valuable contribution to our historical literature.

C. W. FRENCH

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